

*** Draft ***
Comprehensive Plan Outline
2003
City of Troy, NY

Introduction

A Livable Center for Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century

This action plan addresses a range of important issues that will face the City of Troy in the years before 2020. It focuses on reestablishing Troy's historical reputation as a center for innovation and creativity. The plan targets four areas which are the foundations of a prosperous community:

- **SAFE, CLEAN AND FRIENDLY COMMUNITY** – Providing excellent customer service at all levels of City government, including proactive public safety and crime prevention, well maintained public infrastructure, a healthy environment and protected historic resources.
- **DIVERSE ECONOMY CONNECTED TO THE WORLD** – Strengthening the city's economy by diversifying revenue streams necessary to provide high quality City services and enhance property values so that every resident, in addition to the municipality itself, is financially viable.
- **GROWING COMMERCIAL, RETAIL AND INDUSTRIAL SECTORS** – Encouraging growth in the commercial, retail and industrial sectors to create new wealth and work with a strategic focus on new technology sectors and a high level of partnership with the universities and coordination with regional economic development efforts.
- **QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING** – Providing a strong sense of place in safe, livable historic neighborhoods that offer quality housing in rehabilitated buildings, newly constructed homes and special communities for seniors and other community members.
- **STABLE POPULATION LEVEL** – Maintaining the City's population at 50,000 by creating jobs, improving schools, offering cultural enrichment and providing amenities which are enjoyed by current residents and help to attract new residents.

Draft Vision Statement

In the 19th century the City of Troy was a cradle of innovation, boasting a vibrant economy, unique architecture and desirable neighborhoods with the highest per capita income in the nation. Then, and now, Troy's prosperity depended on technology innovation, educational excellence, quality labor, strategic waterfront location and urban character.

Troy's renaissance will reestablish it as a distinctive, world-class, and thriving small city whose stable population and expanding middle class is alive with a spirit of hope and pride. Sharing in the region's increasing prosperity, Troy will provide abundant and fulfilling employment and training, an excellent education, and cultural enrichment to all residents. The technology research and development capacity of its three colleges will help to make Troy the preferred destination for a cluster of locally-owned progressive companies, and its entrepreneurial climate will draw a diverse base of talented and creative workers.

The City will provide unparalleled quality of place where new private sector investment compliments existing architectural integrity and character. Expanded marketing of the city's arts, architecture, waterfront, housing and development sites will attract new investors, residents, workers and visitors. A thriving downtown retail center and artist live/work district, with enhanced waterfront, harbor facilities and parking, will be connected to restored historic neighborhoods by tree-lined streets and trails. People of all ages, cultures and races will live in residential areas where they know their neighbors and feel safe walking to convenient stores and parks. Homebuyers will purchase desirable and affordable homes in neighborhoods which enjoy excellent schools, diverse recreation facilities and state-of-the-art Internet connectivity.

A variety of approaches will be used to expand the tax base and generate revenues necessary to provide high-quality citizen services in a fiscally responsible manner, including capturing the economic spin-off from development at RPI, growing the commercial, retail and industrial sectors, redeveloping brownfield sites and the southern waterfront, enhancing neighborhood amenities, decreasing absentee ownership, increasing homeownership, reducing residential vacancies and creating new market rate housing. This growth will establish Troy as the city of choice for residents and businesses seeking quality workers, quality homes, quality education and a quality community.

GOAL 1

Diversified Municipal Revenue & Property Tax

Possible Measures

- Equal or surpass the region's other cities in significant statistical measures and narrow the gap with suburban locations with regard to median income, rate of homeownership, school test scores and crime rate by 2020.
- Maintain population at 50,000 people by 2015.
- Retire current extraordinary debt by 2020.

Troy will enjoy diversified revenue streams to finance public services and a stable tax base with expanded contributions from commercial and industrial sectors and enhanced residential property values.

1. **INCREASE PERFORMANCE OF ALL LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS** – Troy will use assessment, zoning, subdivision, code enforcement, reassessment and strategic demolition of blighting properties to stimulate investment. It will relocate incompatible users and use performance standards and overlays to preserve, protect and enhance residential character. New codes will be simple to understand and cost effective for investors to build high quality facilities using practical standards.
2. **EXPAND COMMERCIAL, RETAIL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TARGETED INDUSTRY CLUSTERS** – Expanded contributions from these sectors optimize the tax base, and create jobs and wealth for local citizens. The City will identify priority commercial development corridors such as Hoosick Street, Congress Street, Second venue in Lansingburgh and Fourth Street in South Troy. It will steer development to these locations, restructure industry-specific incentives including tax, workforce and financing incentives, and direct infrastructure improvements to the corridors.
3. **CREATE NEW REVENUE SOURCES AND UTILIZE ALTERNATIVE FINANCING STRUCTURES** – The City will strengthen its internal capacity and explore other vehicles to facilitate redevelopment including perhaps formation of an urban redevelopment authority like the Schenectady Metroplex, or the development of tax increment financing districts, special assessment districts or real estate investment trusts which generate new revenue streams and creative financing structures.
4. **GUIDE NEW DEVELOPMENT AND REINVESTMENT THROUGH PLANNING** – The City will undertake community planning activities and prepare a city-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and individual neighborhood and corridor plans. It will implement existing plans including the 2001 Economic Strategy, South Troy Waterfront Plan, and Hoosick & Congress Street Corridor plans.

GOAL 2

TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER ANCHORS DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY DIVERSIFIED MUNICIPAL REVENUE AND PROPERTY TAX STABILITY

Possible Measures

- Increase % of residents who possess a college degree from 19% to 23% by 2020.
- Increase the median income to 80% of the regional median income by 2020.
- Increase % of residents employed knowledge occupations from 8% to 15% by 2020.
- Stabilize % of residents employed in service sectors at 40% (currently 52%) by 2020

Troy will enjoy a diversified economy and become the premier location for smaller second-stage technology companies with research and development linkages to RPI in robotics, biomedicine and new media. The City will ensure that its workforce contributes to, and shares in, the region's increasing prosperity.

1. **STIMULATE TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEURSHIP** – Troy will become an incubator for high technology entrepreneurship in targeted sectors including biomedicine, robotics and new media by creating a technology-business assistance center and financing a technology facilities fund.
2. **ENHANCE TOWN-GOWN RELATIONSHIPS AND GRADUATE RETENTION** – The City will work closely with RPI, the Sage Colleges and Hudson Valley Community College to implement a graduate retention survey and plan, strengthen their rich research and development base, and actively encourage the promotion and transfer of science and technology to local businesses.
3. **INCREASE INVENTORY OF DEVELOPABLE LAND** - The City will expand its inventory of developable land by acquiring property, holding property taken for taxes, selectively demolishing blighting buildings and creating incentive packages for prime sites.
4. **EXPAND CREATIVE CLASS WORKFORCE** - The City will work to close the skills gap for existing workers and expand the percentage of workers employed in creative class occupations by coordinating with regional workforce plans and providing training, childcare and transportation services.
5. **PARTICIPATE IN THE TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP INITIATIVE** - Troy will work closely with CEG's Technology Roadmap Initiative, supporting the regional marketing and communication strategy.
6. **INCREASE COORDINATION BETWEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES** – The City will continue to provide effective economic and business development services, increase coordination between existing partners, and simplify access to resources for new and expanding companies.
7. **TARGET GROWTH IN SERVICES, INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURING SECTORS** – Troy will expand job availability in the high-end services cluster and support appropriately located industrial uses which take advantage of public infrastructure and highway access while buffering adjacent residential uses.

GOAL 3

THRIVING AND VIBRANT DOWNTOWN ANCHORED BY ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS

Possible Measures

- Establish an artist district containing 30 structures and 100 live/work units by 2020.
- Increase the amount of residential living in downtown neighborhood to 25% by 2020.
- Recapture \$20.0 million in retail spending leaking from the local economy by 2020.
- Add 500 new parking spaces by 2010.
- Attract 30 new retail establishments by 2010, 50 by 2015, and 100 by 2020.
- Build a world-class hotel and conference facility by 2015

Troy *will enjoy a thriving and vibrant mixed-use downtown which is recognized as one of the top one-hundred best small arts cities in the United States by 2020.*

1. **ARTIST DISTRICT AND RESIDENTIAL LIVING** – Troy will encourage residential conversion of downtown buildings and development of an artist live/work district using perhaps an overlay zone and purchase of development rights initiative to secure buildings and spaces.
2. **SUPPORT DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS** – Troy will create a safe, attractive and clean downtown through infrastructure investment, coordination with merchants associations and exploration of special revenue structures including perhaps a business improvement district.
3. **CREATE NEW ARTS VENUES** – The City will support expansion of its arts and cultural offerings by supporting existing organizations and strategic partnerships between groups, developing new venues for performing arts and new media, supporting museum development and ensuring that activities are accessible to all citizens.
4. **IMPROVE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE** – The City will address gaps in tourism infrastructure including signage, gateway improvements, lodging and parking. It will work to create a world-class hotel and conference center by 2015.
5. **IMPLEMENT DOWNTOWN MARKETING AND RETAIL RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE** – The City will support creation of a multi-party downtown marketing and retail recruitment initiative focused on unique retail, arts, downtown living and heritage tourism themes. Retail recruitment efforts will focus on sectors with the largest sales leakage – currently defined as apparel, furniture and specialty retail.
6. **DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE AND FLEXIBLE PARKING STRATEGY** – The City will address the parking shortfall in the central business district and neighborhoods through continued implementation of a flexible parking plan, adding additional parking as demand requires.

GOAL 4

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE

Possible Measures

- Achieve the maximum possible rate of homeownership in the city of 48.2% by 2020.
- Reduce the rental vacancy rate to 5% by 2020.
- Reduce surplus residential units from the estimated 3,000 units to 500 by 2020.
- Become the top ranked urban school district in the region by 2020.

Troy *will enjoy the highest possible rate of homeownership in restored historic neighborhoods, with unparalleled affordable and market rate housing choice and quality for residents of all ages and backgrounds.*

1. **MAXIMIZE THE RATE OF HOMEOWNERSHIP** – Troy will develop programs and incentives, support the Homeownership Center, partner with college initiatives and “down-zone” institutional districts to reduce rental vacancies and stimulate homeownership.
2. **STIMULATE MARKET RATE SINGLE-FAMILY AND SENIOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT** – Troy will support a housing mix and new single family housing product to accommodate residents as their incomes rise and their families grow. It will develop retirement communities, assistive living and market-rate senior housing options which enable people to age in place in the community.
3. **RECRUIT CREATIVE WORKFORCE AS HOMEBUYERS** – The City will develop marketing and recruitment efforts targeting talented workers in core occupations considered part of the creative class to become homeowners and active members of neighborhood and school communities.
4. **ENSURE ACCESS TO DECENT QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING** – Troy will support programs that assist low and moderate income residents and first-time homebuyers to own affordable homes and rent quality apartments in privately owned or subsidized housing stock.
5. **IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOUSING QUALITY** – The City will improve housing conditions, reduce absentee ownership and raise standards by enhancing the building code and enforcement efforts, providing grants, loans, and incentives for rehabilitation and encouraging owners of rental properties to live in the same neighborhood as the rental units they own.
6. **CREATE URBAN VILLAGES & NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTERS** – The City will create urban villages, and provide public services and facilities that enhance neighborhood commercial areas.
7. **SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING** – The City will assist neighborhood associations and organizing efforts, and consult citizens regularly to ensure that city resources address issues prioritized by residents.
8. **EXPECT EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION** – Troy will encourage excellence in education by supporting its broad array of public, private and parochial schools, marketing school performance, facilitating educational summits and funding after school and pre school initiatives.

GOAL 5

21ST CENTURY MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Possible Measures

- Eliminate combined sewer overflows into the Hudson River by 2020.
- Increase % of streets rated good or very good from ____% to 75% in 2020.
- Increase % of the City served by high speed internet from 15% to 75% in 2020.

Troy *will maintain and expand its public infrastructure, providing excellence in public services and technology linkages that encourage housing and economic development goals.*

1. **FOCUS ON CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT** – The City will allocate significant effort and funds to capital initiatives that correct past deferred maintenance. It will update the Capital Improvement Program annually, incorporating street paving, water and sewer upgrades, and the elimination of combined sewer overflows.
2. **DELIVER BASIC SERVICES EFFICIENTLY** – Troy will continue to provide conservative fiscal management of all municipal functions, and efficiently deliver basic neighborhood services addressing public safety, pedestrian improvements, traffic management, street condition, sidewalks, garbage removal, civil enforcement and code enforcement.
3. **IMPLEMENT TRAFFIC CALMING & PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS** – Troy will use traffic calming to increase livability and safety, manage volumes and provide good vehicular and pedestrian access for residents, workers and visitors in residential and commercial areas and in the downtown.
4. **CREATIVELY EXPAND EFFORTS TO ENHANCE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE** – Troy will aggressively expand efforts to improve the high speed internet transmission infrastructure city-wide and evaluate the feasibility of creating a city-wide wireless network.
5. **ESTABLISH NEW TRANSIT CONNECTIONS** – Troy will advocate for new transit connections and reverse commuting systems to connect Troy residents to high technology jobs developing elsewhere in the region as a result of Sematech and related initiatives.
6. **ADVOCATE FOR RESTORED PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE** – Troy will explore the feasibility of, and timeframe for, restoring passenger rail service to the City through a station stop in South Troy.
7. **PILOT USE OF NEW ENERGY SOURCES** – The City will evaluate “smart city” power generation systems such as fuel cell technology or other alternative energy sources to power new development projects including future commerce parks.

GOAL 6

HEALTHY COMMUNITY, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Possible Measures

- Expand the trail system by adding 15 miles of new and connecting trail by 2020.
- Return 100 acres of brownfield land to productive use by 2020.
- Plant 500 new trees by 2020.

Troy *will rehabilitate, protect and utilize scenic and natural features to create a pristine physical environment that provides high quality recreation and health care resources for residents.*

1. **PROTECT CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS** – The City will implement zoning and other resource protection measures to conserve open space and protect critical environmental areas including the Hudson River, the “kills”, lakes and reservoirs.
2. **PURSUE HIGHEST LEVEL OF BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION** – Troy will work aggressively to remediate brownfield sites to the highest appropriate standard and return land to productive use in a manner fully protective of human health and the environment.
3. **PROMOTE WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT** – Troy will promote use of the waterfront for entertainment, recreational, cultural, and commercial purposes. It will expand public access to the Hudson River and other waterways and create opportunities for recreational boating through development of a new harbor and full service marina.
4. **ENHANCE TRAIL SYSTEM** – Troy will continue to develop a comprehensive system of multi-use trails and bikeways which link its neighborhoods and connect to the regional trail network.
5. **ENHANCE PARK AND RECREATION AMENITIES** – The City will implement and update the 2002 Urban Parks Recovery Action Plan. It will create an urban forestry plan to encourage planting, care and replacement of trees and landscaping and evaluate the feasibility of creating an archeology park on the site of the former Burden Upper Works.
6. **ENSURE HIGH QUALITY MEDICAL SERVICES** – Troy will work closely with health care providers and the City's two hospitals to ensure access to state-of-the-art facilities and other programs to create a healthy community.

GOAL 7

RICH URBAN AND HISTORIC AMENITIES

Possible Measures

- Facilitate the restoration and reuse of 150 historic properties by 2020.
- Revise and adopt new historic preservation ordinance by 2005.

Troy will guide reinvestment by residents, business owners and non-profit organizations which will drive and sustain rising property values by focusing on quality of place, protection of historic resources and development of an architecturally and aesthetically unique community.

1. **ENHANCE BUILDING AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS** – Troy will enhance its building and façade improvement programs, targeting them to both residential and commercial properties, and providing design assistance and matching grants to participating property owners.
2. **ENHANCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE** – The City will work cooperatively to educate residents about its historic resources and build agreement regarding their protection. It will provide technical assistance to current and prospective owners of historic homes and commercial properties.
3. **IMPROVE GATEWAYS** – Troy will create attractive gateways at major city entrances (Hoosick Street, Congress Street, Troy/Menands Bridge, Green Island Bridge), and it will utilize land use regulations to prevent further deterioration of gateway sites.
4. **ADVOCATE FOR ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES** – Troy will advocate for preservation or adaptive reuse of historic properties whenever possible and complete a volunteer-led resurveying of Troy's historic districts and identification of future districts.
5. **UPDATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCES** – The City will review and update its historic district and landmarks review law and expand it to include demolition criteria.